

Selected Poetry of William Blake

Reading Warm-up A

Read the following passage. Pay special attention to the underlined words. Then, read it again, and complete the activities. Use a separate sheet of paper for your written answers.

Jeff believes that people should have the ability to nurture any special abilities that they have. He thinks people should seize opportunities to explore their potential. If people want to aspire to achieve their creative goals, Jeff is willing to help them.

To help those people who are struggling with difficulty to survive as artists on their own, Jeff used part of his vast fortune to open a school that supports them in their goals. Many of the first artists to be admitted to this school were so grateful that they wept with tears of joy. They could rejoice because they would no longer have to strive on their own and face the difficulties of poverty and loneliness.

Jeff's school focuses on providing these artists with an education that would aid them in the creative process. To do this, the school provides the artists with housing. Even though the living quarters are not fancy, the artists decorate them and make each one unique. In exchange for their education and housing, the artists are simply required to present Jeff with an example of their best work at the end of their stay.

The artists are free to create what they choose, and they produce many different pieces of art. One woman painted a landscape scene that pictured a mead, wildflowers, and a clear blue sky. This mild and gentle image of a peaceful meadow is contrasted by an abstract sculpture made of metal strips that are bound by heavy chains.

Jeff is satisfied that he is doing his part to help artists and encourage artistic expression in his community. He hopes that other people who are more fortunate will also find a cause they would be willing to support in order to improve society.

1. Underline the words that tell what people should seize. What is a word that means about the same as **seize**?
2. Underline the phrase that tells what some people want to aspire to. What is something you **aspire** to?
3. Circle the words that hint at what struggling means. Use **struggling** in a sentence.
4. Circle that word that hints at what wept means. What is a happy occasion at which you have seen someone who **wept** for joy?
5. Circle the word in a nearby sentence that indicates what rejoice means. What is an example of something about which someone might **rejoice**?
6. Underline the words that tell what a mead is. What is something children might do in a **mead**?
7. Circle the word that means about the same as mild. What is a word that means the opposite of **mild**?
8. Underline the phrase that tells by what the metal strips of the sculpture were bound. Tell what **bound** means.